THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • AUGUST 17, 2020 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 32 • LATE CITY EDITION

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INDIA'S COVID-19 TOLL NEARS 50K, TOTAL CASES AT 25.8 LAKH

Total deaths climbed to 49,980 on Sunday morning with 944 people succumbing to the infection in 24 hours

DEATH RATE AMONG WORLD'S LOWEST

India will be the fourth country after the US, Mexico and Brazil to hit the grim toll of 50,000 deaths. However, the country's fatality rate, which fell to 1.93% on Sunday, is among the lowest in the world. "The USA crossed 50,000 deaths in 23 days, Brazil in 95 days and Mexico in 141 days. India took 156 days to reach this national figure," the Union health ministry said

RECOVERY RATE CLIMBS TO 72%

- Accounting for 53,322 fresh recoveries since Saturday morning, a total of 18.62 lakh people have recovered from the infection. India's recovery rate of 72% is much higher than the US's 52%.
- With 19,749 deaths, Maharashtra has reported 39.5% of all Covid fatalities in India. Tamil Nadu with 5,641 deaths (11.2%), follows

6.77 lakh

ACTIVE COVID-19 CASES IN INDIA AS OF SUNDAY MORNING

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Several firsts to mark Parliament monsoon session

UV virus killer, staggered seating of MPs on cards; session likely to start by month-end

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@New Delhi

WITH the monsoon session of Parliament expected to start soon, hectic preparations are underway to make the Houses safe for lawmakers in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

The measures include seating the MPs in chambers and galleries to meet physical distancing norms, installing 10 large screens to help members watch House proceedings. Also, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation system will be used to kill micro-organisms.

Sixty members will be seated in the chamber and 51 in the galleries of the Rajya Sabha (leaving out the 1st row) and 132 in the LS chamber.

This is the first time in the history of Indian Parliament since 1952 that such an arrangement will be in place.

Among the additional installations are four large display screens of 85" size each in the chamber and six of 40" size each in the four galleries.

Polycarbonate sheets will separate the officials' gallery of the Rajya Sabha from the chamber. There will be audio consoles in the galleries, while special cables will connect the two Houses to transmit audio-visual signals.

Two shifts

Both Houses usually function simultaneously. But this time, one House will sit during morning hours and the other in the evening, say sources

"All these arrangements mark the first-of-its-kind session to be held in compliance with the social distancing norms. Using the chambers and galleries of both Houses for holding the session is a first in the history of Indian Parliament since 1952," said the RS secretariat.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had met on July 17 to examine various options to hold session.

RAIN, DELUGE BRING WIDESPREAD MISERY

BELAGAVI

The overflowing Krishna river has inundated farmlands along its banks at Manjri village in Chikkodi taluk on Sunday | EXPRESS

VIJAYAWADA

With most roads submerged, people use afibre-made motor boat to cross a channel near Vijayawada on Sunday | PRASANT MADUGULA

Belagavi comes to halt

Heavy rain in the last 24 hours brought life to a standstill in Belagavi on Sunday. Several low-lying areas in the city were inundated due to clogged drains. P5

Rivers in spate

Incessant showers in Maharashtra have resulted in Krishna and Ghataprabha rivers getting swollen, creating panic among villagers residing on the river banks.

13 villages flooded

Water from Godavari river has flooded 13 villages in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. More than 1,800 people have been shifted to seven rehabilitation centres. P5

350 houses damaged

About 350 houses have been damaged. With water levels of Godavari set to increase, authorities are on high alert. At least five National Disaster Response Force teams have been deployed

2 arrested for rape, murder of minor in UP

NAMITA BAJPAI @Lucknow

UTTAR Pradesh police on Sunday dismissed reports of brutality on the body of a 13-year-old girl who was raped and killed in Lakhimpur Kheri district. Officials said her post-mortem report stated the death was due to strangulation after rape, adding that two men have been arrested for the crime that took place on Friday.

Earlier, media reports claimed grievous injuries were inflicted on the victim's tongue and eyes. According to local police sources, the girl had gone to her fields on Friday afternoon. When she did not return, her family started looking for her and found her body in a sugarcane field. The incident has put the Yogi Adityanath government in a spot with the Opposition berating the government over the law and order situation.

Deputy SP, Dhaurahra, Abhishek Pratap said the two culprits were arrested on Friday night itself. He added that Sanjay Gautam and Santosh Yadav were arrested on the basis of the complaint filed by the girl's father.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav accused the state government of shielding criminals who commit rape, kidnapping and murder.

"The police must initiate such strong action that it becomes a deterrent for criminals," said Congress leader Jitin Prasada.

POLICE TO INVOKE N.S.A. AGAINST ACCUSED

Lakhimpur Kheri SP Satyendra Kumar said the accused have been booked under offences of murder and gangrape. The National Security Act will aslo be invoked against the accused, he added

Ex-cricketer, UP minister Chauhan dies of Covid-19

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Lucknow

A former cricketer and a minister in the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet, Chetan Chauhan, died on Sunday due to Covid-19. He had tested positive for coronavirus on July 11 and was admitted to Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow. Later, on July 31, he was shifted to Medanta hospital in Gurugram as his condition deteriorated.

Doctors at Medanta said, Chauhan died of multiple-organ failure. Chauhan played 40 Tests and 7 ODIs from 1969 to 1981.

He is regarded as the best opening partner Sunil Gavaskar ever had. Together, they shared 11 Test century stands, 10 of them for the opening wicket. He was particularly effective against the fast bowlers of Australia and Pakistan. Not flashy as a batsman, he put a premium on his wicket and was difficult to dislodge. P11

EXPRESS READ

Pvt train operators can choose halts

Private operators who will be handed over 150 trains to ply on 109 routes by the Railways will have the freedom to choose halt stations of the trains they operate, documents released by Indian Railways have shown.

Telephone service on between UAE, Israel

Telephone service between the UAE and Israel began on Sunday as the two countries opened diplomatic ties, part of a deal brokered by the US that required Israel to halt its plan to annex West Bank land sought by the Palestinians. | P9

WITH THIS ISSUE — THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex — 32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex (TABLOID) & 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

K'taka cabinet to discuss ban on PFI at next meeting

ANUSHA RAVI & BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Cabinet is expected to discuss the issue of banning the Popular Front of India (PFI), the ideological wing of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), at its next meeting scheduled to be held on Thursday.

If Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa approves the proposal, the State Home Ministry will write to the Union Home Ministry with its recommendations.

While the State Government cannot propose a ban on the SDPI, since it is a political outfit that has contested elections in Karnataka, the cabinet ministers are set to propose a ban on the PFI.

The SDPI, which was registered as a political party with the Election Commission of India in 2013, has been making gradual inroads, cornering minority votes, in Karnataka since the 2013 Assembly elections. "They managed to retain their deposit in the Narasimharaja Assembly constituency in Mysuru," a political analyst, who did not want to be named, pointed out. CONTINUED ON: P5

PROHIBITORY ORDERS EXTENDED

City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant has extended prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC in DJ Halli and KG Halli till August 18. A company of the Rapid Action Force patrolled the area of Sunday too, even as family members, mainly women, protested near DJ Halli police station demanding to know why their sons and brothers were taken into custody when they were at home when the violence broke out. The police, however, dispersed the group citing prohibitory orders.

VIRAL ATTACK

27 men at ITBP's Belagavi camp test positive in a day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi

IN the biggest single-day spike, 27 personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Force have tested positive for Covid-19 at the CIJW School at Halbhavi Camp in Belagavi on Friday. So far, the numbers had remained in single digits, according to sources. However, the establishment was not forthcoming on whether more personnel had tested positive on subsequent days.

Some personnel of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) School, at Torali village in Khanapur jungles, which trains Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans, and the Army Station in Belagavi have also tested positive. They are all being treated at the Military Hospital in Belagavi, sources said.

On Saturday, Belagavi Superintendent of Police Laxman Nimbargi also tested positive for coronavirus during random testing.

Meanwhile, 478 new cases were recorded in the district on Sunday while 410 patients, who had recovered, were discharged. Of the total of 7,810 cases so far, 3,769 are still active while 3,920 patients have recovered. The district has recorded 121 Covid casualties as of Sunday.

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SECOND INNINGS

MSD pads up for organic fertiliser venture

ATREYO MUKHOPADHYAY
@Chennai

DONE with playing cricket for India, MS Dhoni's second innings is likely to see him spend more time with his business ventures.

The former skipper, who will continue to play for Chennai Super Kings, remains a sought-after name in the endorsement world. But there is an organic fertiliser project that might take up a chunk of his time after this year's IPL.

According to Mihir Diwakar, MD of Aarka Sports which manages Dhoni and other cricketers, the player from Ranchi has become a stakeholder in New Global. This company has two products in the market already and plans to increase the number to 15.

"Dhoni will be associated in a big way and I will be in the UAE in September to finalise talks with him about this and other matters. He has tested the organic fertiliser in his farmhouse," said Diwakar.

New Global has factories in Mumbai and Bhavnagar in Gujarat, other than an office in New Delhi. Dhoni seems to be impressed with what he has seen. "Dhoni is happy with the product and has acquired a big stake. This will be launched formally after the IPL," added Diwakar.

Brand likely to stay intact

Dhoni's business partners and managers are confident the brand won't be affected post India retirement. He endorses nearly 30 brands | P11